

REMARKS

I. Status of the Claims

Claims 1-19, 31, 32, 44, 45, 50-66, and 71-89 are pending and stand rejected. Claims 33-35 and 49 are pending and are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. Without prejudice or disclaimer, Claims 1, 79, 84, and 89 have been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 48, claim 48 has been canceled and claim 49 has been amended to correct its dependency. Accordingly, no new matter has been added.

II. Rejection

Applicants continue to traverse the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102 for the reasons of record. However, in view of the present amendment, this rejection is now moot.

III. Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner objects to claim 48 "as being dependent upon a rejected base claim," but indicated that it "would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims." Office Action at 4. The present amendment results in claim 1 incorporating the subject matter of claim 48. Therefore, the present amendment places this application in condition for immediate allowance.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing Amendments and Remarks, Applicants respectfully await a Notice of Allowance from the Examiner.

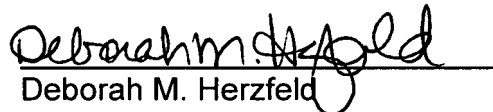
If the Examiner believes a telephone conference could be useful in resolving any outstanding issues, he is respectfully urged to contact Applicants' undersigned counsel at 202-408-4368.

If there is any fee due in connection with the filing of this Preliminary Amendment, please charge the fee to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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By:


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Dated: August 13, 2007